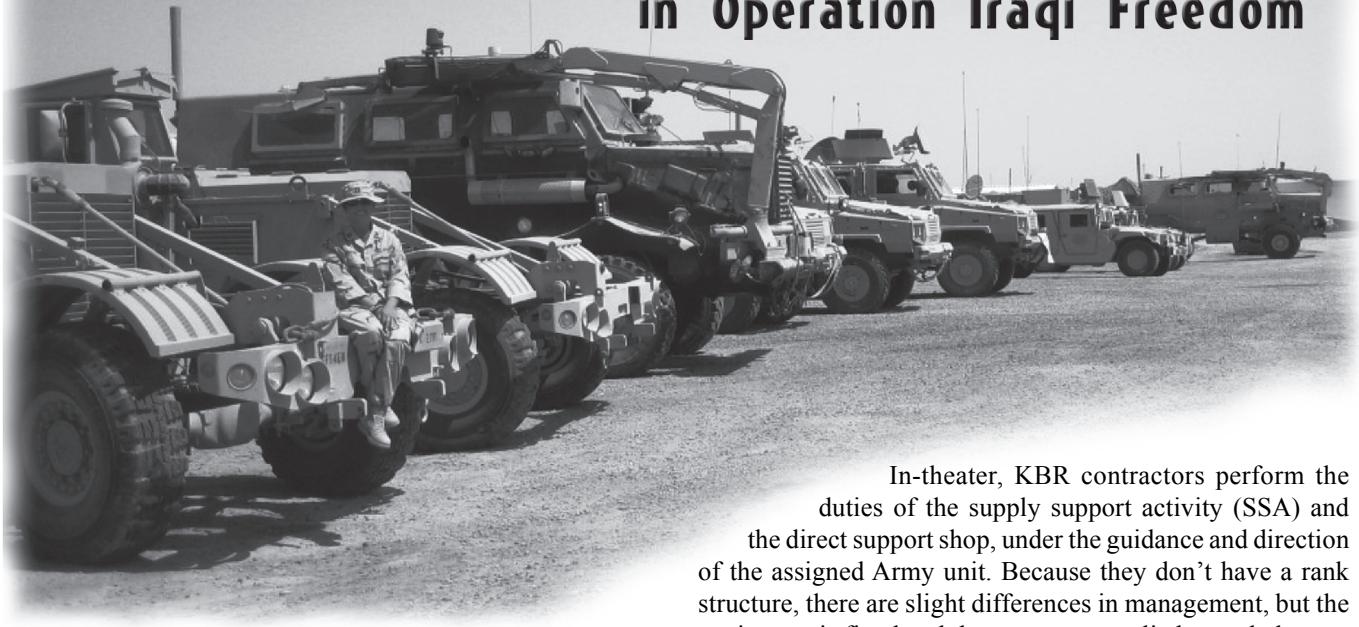


Winning Logistical Battles Together: Civilian and Logistical Support in Operation Iraqi Freedom



By Captain Caprice Vargas

These days, civilians are not just on the battlefield; they are shaping it and contributing to the fight. In the maintenance and logistics world, the Army is relying heavily on contracted civilian support so it can focus more on the mission. This is great for the Soldier on the ground.

The 130th Engineer Brigade Maintenance Office was responsible for coordinating and communicating with these outside civilian agencies. If a unit is deploying to Iraq, especially as a part of a higher headquarters engineer element, the unit should prepare and train its Soldiers for the presence of these civilians on the battlefield. It is a lot like the civilian business world—the unit will have to make contacts, watch for upcoming fieldings and projects and, most of all, have a good rapport with the civilians.

Civilians on the Battlefield

On a daily basis, the 130th worked with civilian contractors employed by KBR, Inc. (formerly Kellogg, Brown, & Root); ManTech International Corporation; Caterpillar®; American Defense Systems, Inc. (ADSI); and L-3 Communications, as well as Department of the Army (DA) civilians.

KBR

KBR provides everything from maintenance support to transportation of parts and equipment. In addition to having military service units operate maintenance support shops, the Army hires contractors to enhance the capabilities of the units.

In-theater, KBR contractors perform the duties of the supply support activity (SSA) and the direct support shop, under the guidance and direction of the assigned Army unit. Because they don't have a rank structure, there are slight differences in management, but the equipment is fixed and the parts are supplied nonetheless.

ManTech

ManTech supports many different types of equipment. The maintenance shop frequently interacts with this agency, attending meetings with ManTech contractors and project managers. ManTech works for the Product Manager, Assured Mobility Systems; together, the Army and ManTech have improved route clearance equipment. Although the ManTech shop isn't run like a military maintenance shop, similarities do exist, such as using a DA Form 5988-E, *Equipment Maintenance and Inspection Worksheet*, to open a job order.



A grader receives additional armor.



An up-armored D7 dozer is tested.

Caterpillar

Caterpillar handles many pieces of special engineer equipment that is not logistically supported by the Army system. A lot of engineer equipment is difficult to maintain, and parts are hard to acquire. So the maintenance shop relies on Caterpillar to provide mechanics for upper-level maintenance and parts. A blanket purchase agreement is used to buy parts for equipment such as dozers, scrapers, and graders that are hard to acquire. Once the parts arrive from the Caterpillar delivery system, their mechanics also install them. This operation is run similarly to ManTech.

ADSI and L-3 Communications

At Logistics Support Area (LSA) Anaconda, ADSI and L-3 Communications have made a joint effort to support engineers with special missions and special equipment needs. The Combat Engineer/Material Handling Equipment, Product Manager, hired ADSI. Civilians are in charge of the shop, and it runs well.

Parts Acquisition

The parts acquisition for the brigade is a huge challenge. Many civilians helped the 130th with parts acquisition and tracking. The DA civilians at the United States Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) help track down parts through the Army system. Parts managers from Caterpillar and the AutoMAK General Trading and Contracting Company help acquire critical parts for engineer equipment, including older equipment that is relevant to the mission but being phased out or replaced. These parts are generally shipped

using civilian methods until they arrive in-theater, and then it becomes the unit's responsibility to transport the part on location.

Conclusion

Civilian and military personnel all have different missions in the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater. Without these agencies, vulnerabilities that could injure or kill Soldiers in action would exist. Our goal is one and the same: Win the war and keep our Soldiers safe.

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